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**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
Newport, R.I.**

**THE AUDIENCES OF THE MILITARY-MEDIA STAGE: AN OPERATIONAL
COMMANDER'S ROLE**

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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Abstract

The military-media relationship historically has been far from endearing and has varied drastically through American history as astonishing advances in technology have occurred. Shunning or avoiding journalists as practiced by certain military commanders in America's past was counterproductive. The effective operational commander must recognize the impact and influence of the media on selected audiences (the political leadership, the American people, the military forces, the enemy and the international community) and must seek to optimize the military-media relationship and the communication of the desired message to these audiences while balancing the risk. The gradual abandonment of the containment and strict censorship of the media and the movement toward increased embedding has yielded large dividends in the military-media relationship. Likewise commanders have been increasingly satisfied with the message generated by the media as they report in the midst of their units. Operational commanders must capitalize on this momentum and lean forward to further advance the relationship and thereby enhance the desired communication.

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INTRODUCTION

“All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players...”¹ Far truer today than William Shakespeare could have imagined when in the sixteenth century he penned this line for Jacques in *As you Like It*. With advances in modern media technology and enterprises such as Cable News Network (CNN), virtually all the world is the stage with actors performing 24 hours a day before a worldwide audience. Within the media's world audience reside innumerable subsets of viewers, listeners and readers who have unique importance to those desiring to communicate a message. Advertisers are keenly aware of this. Today, operational commanders must likewise carefully consider the media's impact on specific audiences as reporters cover military related activities. Shunning or avoiding journalists as practiced by certain military commanders in America's past was counterproductive. The effective operational commander must recognize the impact and influence of the media on selected audiences (the political leadership, the American people, the military forces, the enemy and the international community) and must seek to optimize the military-media relationship and the communication of the desired message to these audiences while balancing the risk.

The Military-Media Relationship Examined

The military-media relationship historically has been far from endearing. In 1971 President Nixon, as the Commander-in Chief in the throes of the Vietnam conflict, argued that the greatest enemy was the press.² The lack of trust of the press by military leaders has been evident throughout America's wars. Concern for operational security has fueled much of that mistrust and disdain for the press. In the Civil War, General Sherman was exasperated by the timely publication of the movements, weaknesses and plans for reinforcement of his armies. The

Confederates capitalized on this information to pre-position their armies and to alter operational plans. Sherman banned reporters from traveling with his troops and forbade their reporting. When a *New York Herald* correspondent ignored Sherman's order, he arrested him and tried him as a spy.³ Beyond this mistrust for security reasons has been the concern for the media's lack of credibility. CBS and Dan Rather's use of forged documents in the case of President Bush's experience in the National Guard prompted questions of integrity even as high as the network anchor level. Even though this scandal led to the termination of Dan Rather's colleague, Mary Mapes, for her activities surrounding the forged documents the subsequent unrepentant attitude did not help to mitigate the concern.⁴

The military and media professions are by nature antagonistic. The cultures are divergent and as such they produce "natural enemies."⁵ The contrasting differences between the military and the media professions provide insight into the friction. Journalism as a profession, if it is even valid to consider it a profession, has no defined list of requirements or qualifications, no enforceable formalized code of ethics and no governing, responsible body.⁶ Competition is fierce in journalism. Reporters clamor to be the first with a story and to package their product in a marketable format while facing pressure to bend or break rules.⁷ Furthermore, journalists are characterized by skepticism and commonly have been noted to ridicule patriotism, religion, authority and regimentation.⁸ In contrast, the military profession is marked by training, doctrine, discipline and respect for authority. Members of the profession are characteristically patriotic and often hold strong religious beliefs.⁹ Being a team player is vital in the profession, and managing violence requires adherence to high ethical standards, compliance with strict procedures, willingness to accept one's hierarchal position and discipline.¹⁰

The missions of the military and the media are also radically different. The military's role is to fulfill national objectives as directed by civilian, political leadership. The mission characteristically centers on fighting the nation's battles, and this requires planning and execution with appropriate secrecy for effectiveness and safety. In contrast, the media's mission is to inform the public in a package, often with sensationalism and controversy, that someone will want to buy. This military-media contrast of secrecy and exposure sets the relationship on edge. "Commanders worry over leaks of information that might compromise an operation. Keeping secrets is anathema to a reporter."¹¹ Additional understanding of the friction in this relationship is provided by Fred Reed, a journalist with expertise in military affairs, who wrote, "I know that I can easily sell articles criticizing the military, but that a piece praising anything the services do is nearly impossible to peddle. In conversation, magazine editors almost without exception are hostile and contemptuous of the military."¹²

The military-media relationship, though destined to be strained, is necessary to ensure the health of America. In *On War*, Carl von Clausewitz, a nineteenth century military theorist, discussed the relationship and balance that is required within the triangle of the government, the military and the people in war.¹³ This relationship was carefully addressed in the eighteenth century by the framers of the Constitution who sought to prevent the possibility of a military dictatorship in America. The Constitution places the people indirectly in control of the military by their ability to elect a President who serves as the Commander-In-Chief of the military. The Constitution also guarantees freedom of the press in the First Amendment to ensure that independent information can be presented to the people. The media then serves as a watch dog of the government and the military for the people of America and helps to ensure that the balance between the government, the military and the people is maintained.¹⁴

The Military-Media Relationship in American History

The military-media relationship has varied drastically through America's history of wars, and astonishing advances in technology have driven many of the changes in the relationship. Media in the Revolutionary War took the form of pamphlets and newspapers. Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* was published in both forms and undoubtedly aided in stirring the population into rebellion. "There is little doubt the nascent mass media tilled the fields of public opinion, rendered them receptive to the seeds of insurgency and liberally fertilized them with a mixture of logic and passion."¹⁵

With the Civil War the telegraph changed the speed of transmission of information and war correspondents became active. Partisan newspapers in the North and South have been credited with inciting the secession, starting the war, leaking operational plans, revealing incompetence and inspiring hope.¹⁶ Both sides censored reporters and some Union generals excluded them from their camps. Ulysses Grant detested reporters and cursed that they were about as valuable as confederate spies.¹⁷ President Lincoln invited reporters to the White House and regularly sought them out for more current information than he received from his staff.¹⁸

The Spanish American War was associated with improved newspaper production and publication but no radical change in communication technology. Newspapers were filled with yellow journalism and the Hearst and Pulitzer circulation battle raged.¹⁹ For the invasion of Cuba it was estimated that there was "...one journalist for every seven Army officers in the expeditionary force."²⁰

In World War I correspondents traveled with the units, wore uniforms and carried rank. Censorship took the form of an accreditation process with the Secretary of War and required posting a \$10,000 bond to insure compliance. The Espionage Act of 1917 restricted publishing

anything that could be of value to the enemy or interfere with friendly operations, and the Sedition Act of 1918 prohibited criticism of the military or the government (The Supreme Court ruled both Acts to be constitutional in spite of First Amendment considerations). Radio broadcasting was nationalized and the Committee on Public Information was established as a governmental office of propaganda and censorship.²¹

With World War II came the added technology of transoceanic transmission of voice and pictures by wire and wireless cable and live radio broadcasting across continents and oceans. America accredited 2600 journalists in WWII, a marked increase from the fewer than 100 in WWI.²² The Office of Censorship was created under the War Powers Act and the government requested voluntary censorship and review of militarily sensitive material.²³ There were some censorship conflicts with journalists who interfaced with General McArthur and Admiral King, but overall in this massive war of good against the aggressive evil empires in Germany and Japan, the military-media relationship was positive.²⁴

Media technology in the Korean War was little different than WWII. Television was in its infancy, in few homes and largely entertainment oriented. Only 250 correspondents were accredited to cover U.N. forces.²⁵ Censorship of reports from the field was not imposed until the entrance of China into the War. General McArthur's crimping of the press led some to leave Korea and test the censorship by reporting from Japan. The seeds of military-media frustration were sown in preparation for Vietnam.²⁶

Vietnam was a watershed in military-media relations. It was the first television war and Americans witnessed unforgettable, real life images in their living rooms and kitchens. It is conjectured that great variety of experience was present in the 464 correspondents accredited to Vietnam. The young and inexperienced, who wanted to make a name for themselves, were

accused of producing stories that had questionable credibility and objectivity.²⁷ Initially censorship was voluntary and coverage was encouraged with the hope that it would garner support for American intervention. As the popularity of the conflict diminished, President Johnson launched a public relations campaign. When reality reporting from Vietnam contradicted the messages of the President, public support for the conflict plummeted.²⁸ Coverage of the Tet Offensive was a turning point in the conflict and became a source of vigorous debate over whether to blame the military or the media for the loss in Vietnam.²⁹

Whether it was for safety of the journalists, for operational security or for the general feeling in the military that the media was to blame for the outcome in Vietnam, at the start of the invasion of Grenada, reporters were denied access to the island at the time of the invasion and for the first two days of the operation. The restriction was hotly protested, and the result was the appointing of the Sidle Panel composed of military officers and journalists to provide recommendations for future coverage. Out of the panel came the recommendation to include public affairs in operational planning and to establish a national media pool.³⁰

Both the military and the media were optimistic concerning the results of the Sidle Panel, but when Operation Just Cause in Panama was being planned, for security reasons, the military decided to conceal operational plans from the media until the start of hostilities and to then transport a media pool into theater. With a delay in the arrival of the pool reporters who had complied with the protocol, the story was scooped by other journalists on the scene. Further anger ensued and the result was a deeper wedge in military-media relations.³¹

With the Gulf War I (Operation Desert Storm) came efforts improve the military-media coverage and relationship. Satellite communications facilitated live transnational television transmission as opposed to the day old video tapes of the Vietnam era. Reporters initially faced

challenges to enter the country from Saudi Arabia, but eventually 1600 media representatives were in theater. Few were embedded with the Army, but the Marines capitalized on this practice and reaped advantageous coverage. The military aggressively utilized briefings by senior military leaders and was largely able to communicate its desired message. The media was left feeling unfulfilled in their watch dog role. Additionally, this became the first war with CNN playing a significant role with Peter Arnett behind enemy lines broadcasting from Baghdad.³²

The pendulum swung, and media involvement in Somalia and Haiti was extensive. On the beaches of Somalia, pre-positioned cameras and lights made the scene more like a movie set than an actual expeditionary landing. Fortunately for the safety of the troops and the journalists, the landing was unopposed. In Haiti, reporters were privy to top secret operational plans prior to the invasion, and the media self imposed censorship of troop landings during the initial hour of the invasion. Overall, the military-media relationship was improving.³³

In Bosnia, the Army chose to embed twenty-four reporters directly into units with the expectation of boosting troop morale and gaining support from the American people. The effort was largely a success though the Army was forced to deal with the controversy generated by an Army Colonel's racial comment. In Kosovo, a gag order was issued for reporters during the air campaign, and reporters were subjected to daily briefings that provided little information. Dissatisfied with the new process, reporters attempted to get out into the field to produce their own stories. Milosevic now had greater opportunity to communicate his side of the story. Subsequently the Serbian TV station was targeted in the air campaign after which many reporters returned to their operational units as embedded reporters.³⁴

In Afghanistan, media coverage largely followed the pattern of Gulf War I with reporters having limited access to the battlefield and receiving regulated information flow from

operational headquarters and the Pentagon. For Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld recognized that instantaneous reports would be available to the world from numerous non-American sources and that military public relations efforts alone would be unable to keep pace. He therefore adopted an aggressive supportive embedded media program which ultimately involved positioning 770 journalists with coalition forces and over 550 with ground units. In the height of the conflict more than 6,000 stories were generated per week. Amazingly within a week of the fall of Baghdad, the number of embedded reporters in Iraq shrank to less than forty!³⁵ The embedded program was generally considered a success and was well received by both the military and the media. The greatest dissatisfaction expressed is the snap shot or soda straw view of events that came from embeds in hundreds of units. The big picture was often not communicated. As one reporter described, “You were somewhat like the second dog on the dogsled team and you saw an awful lot of the dog in front and little bit to the left and right. But if you saw an interesting story...you couldn’t break out of the dogsled team without losing your place.”³⁶ This impaired freedom has spurred the drive for unilateral reporting which involves no accreditation and allows independent movement. In Gulf War I, unilateral reporters were more common than in subsequent engagements in Kosovo, Afghanistan or OIF.³⁷ But currently, editors are excited about unilateral reporting and anticipate greater use in the next conflict despite safety concerns. Military enthusiasm for unilaterals is low in that they “...expect support and safety from the military forces, and claim ill will if they are shut out of interviews, or worse, shot at by attacking forces.”³⁸

The Audiences and the Operational Commander

Even though harmony in the military-media relationship has waxed and waned as technology has evolved in American history, freedom of the press guarantees that the media will

continue to proclaim messages pertaining to the military. Audiences interested in those messages delivered by the media include: the political leadership, the American people, the military forces, the enemy and the international community. Effective operational commanders must appreciate the impact and influence of those messages on these respective audiences.

First, operational commanders must consider the impact and influence of the media on the political leadership. In the Vietnam conflict, anchor man Walter Cronkite reported on the national, evening news that America had essentially lost the war; it was time to get out. President Johnson declared that if Walter Cronkite had been lost, the average American certainly was too. Apparently the media's impact was so great on President Johnson that it caused him not to seek re-election and helped shape his national security policy.³⁹ In like manner, the Rolling Thunder bombing campaign initiated in 1965 was severely criticized by the media, proclaiming that the bombing would dissuade Hanoi from negotiation. President Johnson yielded to media pressure and halted the campaign. After resumption of bombing and again further cries from media critics, President Johnson subsequently halted bombing on at least two additional occasions.⁴⁰ George Stephanopoulos, of President Clinton's staff, remarked that the White House followed twenty-four hour news cycles and that CNN forced near instantaneous reactions. Media images of starving children prompted American intervention in Somalia and images of a "...single American helicopter pilot being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu almost immediately caused the Clinton administration to announce the withdrawal of US forces from Somalia."⁴¹ Without question, political leadership is profoundly influenced by the media. Effective operational commanders therefore appropriately manage media resources and the military-media relationship recognizing the potential impact of the media's message on their political leadership.

Secondly, operational commanders must consider the impact and influence of the media on the American people. General Eisenhower recognized the importance of the media on the machine-like relationship between the military and the people. He indicated that the product of journalists can either squirt grease into the machinery for smooth operations or throw sand into it.⁴² General Washington positively used the press through the distribution of pamphlets about British rule to garner public support, shape public will and raise a people's army.⁴³ Vietnam illustrates the media's intense power of negative influence on public opinion. President Nixon noted that in the television nightly news and the morning papers, the day's hostilities were reported battle after battle with little conveyance of the purpose for involvement. This literal depiction of the conflict led to such profound demoralization of public opinion that it seemed questionable if America would ever be able to fight another war abroad with solidarity of support at home.⁴⁴ Reports of the Tet offensive were blatantly distorted such that a crushing victory over the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army was presented as a Communist success. In the throes of the antiwar movement "...depressing tales of American casualties, butchered civilians, ambushed convoys and widespread heavy fighting were emphasized in the press. The overall American and South Vietnamese victory was not."⁴⁵ "In the end, Tet was a crushing defeat for the Communists...everywhere, that is, but the evening news."⁴⁶ Vietnam, as the first television war, marked the potency of that medium in shaping public opinion in a democracy engaged in a protracted conflict.⁴⁷ Aptly describing the impact and utility of leveraging the media, Philip Knightly wrote, "On the home front, information—news—is used to arouse the fighting spirit of the nation, to mobilize public opinion about the war, to suppress dissent and to steel the people for the sacrifices needed for victory."⁴⁸ More recently, from an operational perspective in

Operation Desert Shield, General A. M. Gray, then Commandant of the Marine Corps, astutely recognized:

The long-term success of Desert Shield depends in great measure on support of the American people. The news media are the tools through which we can tell Americans about the dedication, motivation, and sacrifices of their Marines. Commanders should include public affairs requirements in their operational planning to ensure that the accomplishments of our Marines are reported to the public.⁴⁹

Unequivocally, the media influences the will of the people having the potential to upset the balance of the Clausewitzian trinity in war. Effective operational commanders recognize the impact of the media's message on the American people and seek to appropriately manage media resources and the military-media relationship.

Thirdly, operational commanders must consider the impact and influence of the media on their military forces. In Gulf War I, reporters largely created their stories from information disseminated to the press pool. The Marines however embedded media more than any of the other services and numerous positive stories about infantry actions and successes were transmitted home. This media exposure resulted in enhanced morale for the units. Likewise, the decision to widely embed the media in OIF often led to remarkable bonding between the reporters and their units and enthusiasm in the knowledge that live reports could be viewed by loved ones at home. By way of contrast, in Vietnam, morale of the military members was weakened through the influence of the media. The majority of the forces were comprised of youth that had teethered on television. Anchor reporters were familiar faces that had been invited nightly into their homes at the dinner hour through childhood and were perceived as trusted friends. Morale dropped as they heard reporters declare that the war was wrong and that troops should be withdrawn. As the anti-war movement strengthened, so did the intensity of its media coverage. President Nixon believed that the anti-war activists not only influenced the public and

policy makers but also profoundly affected the morale and discipline of the forces.⁵⁰ Not only does journalism have the power to affect the morale of the military forces, but it also provides power in the hands of operational commanders in the form of real time intelligence. In OIF LtGen James T. Conway, the commander at I Marine Expeditionary Force headquarters, was able to watch live coverage of an infantry battalion's unimpeded movement in Baghdad with only the apparent presence of friendly Iraqi civilians. Using this intelligence and information from other live feeds, he was able to authorize continued advance, alter his speed of attack and modify his entire plan.⁵¹ Effective operational commanders recognize the media's potential to influence the morale of the military forces, seek to appropriately manage media resources and the military-media relationship and utilize real time media coverage as an intelligence tool.

Fourthly, operational commanders must consider the impact and influence of the media on the enemy. Through American history, commanders have feared that the enemy will gain an advantage through breeches in operational security via the media. This has been a potent source of friction in the military-media relationship. The commander's operational success and troop safety often hinges on secrecy, and success for reporters involves being the first to expose things hidden. Frustration with the media's unveiling of operational plans in the Civil War led both Union and Confederate governments to ban newspapers from printing any story that would be useful the enemy.⁵² Voluntary and at times involuntary censorship has been expected of the media in every conflict since, though not always achieved. In OIF, reporters granted access to the forces were mandated to agree to a set of ground rules concerning operational security. Since reporters today can transmit live at any moment via satellite connections, monitoring is not practicable and violations did occur. Geraldo Rivera embedded with the 101st Airborne Division on the way to Baghdad drew a map in the sand disclosing their current location, distance and

speed traveled and anticipated next location. For his violation he was pulled as an embed and fortunately his violation apparently did not result in any coalition casualties.⁵³ In a proactive manner, media messages have been used as a tool in information operations and also in enemy deception as a form of non-lethal fires and non-kinetic targeting. In OIF, an information operations theme was enemy capitulation. To send the message to the enemy that surrender was a viable option, reporters could be directed to cover units handling large numbers of enemy prisoners of war to advertise humane treatment and receipt of food and shelter.⁵⁴ Embedded journalists countered enemy propaganda and decreased enemy morale in OIF. Reporters sent live broadcasts while forces took the International Airport and captured key sites in the city while the Iraqi Minister of Information, “Baghdad Bob,” transmitted that coalition forces were nowhere near the Baghdad.⁵⁵ Regarding deception operations, the Confederate Army deceived the Union Army into believing the Confederate army was much larger than it actually was by providing false information in the Richmond newspaper and by shifting troop positions.⁵⁶ While enemy deception is an operational fire, deception achieved by providing the media with false information raises ethical questions and risks loss of future credibility. In Gulf War I, media coverage of Marine exercises off the coast of Kuwait focused enemy attention away from the actual left hook of invading forces from Saudi Arabia through western Iraq. In this case, media coverage aided enemy deception but no direct misinformation was provided to the media. Effective operational commanders seek to appropriately manage media resources and the military-media relationship recognizing the risk of the media’s message on operational security and also the impact of the message as a tool of information operations and in enemy deception.

Lastly, operational commanders must consider the impact and influence of the media on the international community. Modern technology and competitive reporting has created a

twenty-four hour news cycle, and the coverage of war has expanded from a domestic to a global audience. Just as national opinion profoundly shapes the decisions made by political leadership, so “world opinion is now applying leverage in a way it never has before.”⁵⁷ In Gulf War I, powerful images of beneficent patriot missiles screaming to intercept Saddam’s evil, potentially chemical carrying, scud missiles provided unforgettable, striking messages to international audiences. Many Arab nations expressed disdain for Iraq’s assault on its Saudi neighbor, and Israel was placated enough to refrain from retaliating and possibly splitting the tenuous coalition.⁵⁸ Peter Arnett, of CNN, reported from Baghdad providing spectacular accounts of the initial allied bombardment of the city. But much controversy stemmed from his apparent exploitation by Iraqi officials as they led him to report of hundreds of civilian casualties in what had been targeted by coalition forces as a command and control center. Without an independent, thorough, investigative report, the claims remain questionable and unsubstantiated; nevertheless, the irretrievable message received by world was doubt concerning the coalition’s avoidance of collateral damage and civilian casualties. Anti-allied opinion was also noted to increase among Arab nations in the area.⁵⁹ Clearly, effective operational commanders recognize the strength and potential global impact of media’s message and therefore seek to appropriately manage media resources and the military-media relationship.

The impact of the media’s message on the respective audiences is remarkable and it has been argued that recognizing that impact and seeking to optimize the military-media relationship in an effort to enhance the desired communication is a vital responsibility for operational commanders. Some might argue that due to the inherent military-media friction stemming from differences in mission and professionalism, the relationship can never be effectively managed nor can the desired message be enhanced. Indeed, the pervasive disdain of the media by the

military following Vietnam (believing the media was responsible the loss) and the mistrust of the military by the media (believing that the military is generally either intentionally deceptive or hiding information under the guise of operational security) has augmented this notion of irreconcilability. Recent history however has demonstrated the fallacy of this argument. The gradual abandonment of containment and strict censorship of the media and the movement toward increased embedding has yielded large dividends in the military-media relationship. Likewise commanders have been increasingly satisfied with the message generated by the media as they report in the midst of their units. Operational commanders must capitalize on this momentum and lean forward to further advance the relationship and thereby enhance the desired communication.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Fundamentally, operational commanders must recognize the impact of the media's message on the respective audiences and hence appropriately value the role of the media. Hence, planning should include media presence and utilization throughout the operation and official updating and contextualizing must be regularly scheduled and prioritized.
2. Operational commanders must seek to optimize the military-media relationship through military education and training. In that embedded reporters will interface not only with commanders but with the most junior sailors, soldiers, airman and marines; specifically tailored programs must be utilized across the spectrum. Education must counter the hostile attitude toward the media that may exist.⁶⁰ The Public Affairs Office (PAO) can assist in practical interview training to including topics such as: preparation, answering techniques, control, security and communicating the desired message.⁶¹ The PAO can also serve as a liaison with the media assisting in organizing, researching, preparing and monitoring interviews.

3. Operational commanders must seek to optimize the military-media relationship by supporting media education and training about the military. Some reporters lack military experience and are unaware of the difference between an M-16 and F-16 let alone rank structure and a morass of acronyms.⁶² Media boot camps should be regularly available for reporters to train at national centers or with the home units, and they also should be invited to participate in routine exercises.⁶³ Another means of enhancing media understanding of the military is to “reverse embed,” by sending mid-grade officers to work in major networks, cable channels, news magazines and newspapers. These officers could provide insight into military culture (why even though an O-1 outranks an E-9, he would think more than twice about giving him a direct order), context for events in the field and coordination for media-command interactions.⁶⁴
4. Operational commanders must seek to optimize the military-media relationship and balance risk by providing and educating concerning crystal clear ground rules. Higher authority may provide a list of rules to grant media access to troops, but units have the liberty to augment the rules if specifically warranted.⁶⁵ Commanders must also promulgate their own ground rules concerning management of transient, unilateral reporters whose presence adds to friction in war.
5. Operational commanders must seek to optimize the military-media relationship and enhance the message through knowledgably selecting representatives from the spectrum of journalism. Hosting embeds only representing weekly magazines would undoubtedly be less effective in enhancing communication than choosing a combination of television, newspaper, magazine and regional reporters. The media too would likely view this arrangement as more equitable.
6. Operational commanders must seek to optimize the military-media relationship and enhance the message through facilitation and prolongation of the embedded media process. In the next conflict to continue to ride this wave of improved military-media relationship, the embedded

program must be even more accommodating. The largest challenge is maintaining coverage after the height of the conflict. In OIF, the number of embedded media dropped from 770 to 40 in one week after the fall of Saddam. The majority of stories then came from reporters in Baghdad hotels, who in their charge to produce stories tended toward sensational, negative events like ambushes and bombings with little time or interest in good news stories about restoration.⁶⁶ The attrition of reporters was significantly influenced by the costs of keeping media on the field. In that PAO resources were inadequate to produce the desired message, media funding should be explored to prolong the embedding process.

CONCLUSION

The acts reported by the media on the stage of war are directed to an audience that is enormous and diverse. Military commanders must appreciate the impact of the media's messages on those various spectators (the political leadership, the American people, the military forces, the enemy and the international community). Media presence is enduring and it can be expected to continue to exercise its freedom and demonstrate interest in monitoring the actions of the military. The military-media relationship in America has vacillated through its history. Strict censorship and restrictions proved to be counterproductive, but the overall success of the embedded media program in OIF has garnered improved harmony. Sadly, at times leaders such as Milosevic, Hussein and Bin Laden have been more welcoming of reporters than military commanders and have been more successful in communicating their desired messages. It can be anticipated that America's future enemies will become even more sophisticated in their media management programs and will be adept at manipulation and distortion without regard for veracity.⁶⁷ America must continue to optimize the military-media relationship and seek to enhance the desired communication.

NOTES

¹ William Shakespeare, "As You Like It," in *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Borders Classics, 2004): 239.

² Richard Seamon, review of *Reporting Vietnam: Military and Media at War*, by William H. Hammond, *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* 125, no. 2 (Feb 1999): 86.

³ Jon Mordan, "Press Pools, Prior Restraint and the Persian Gulf," *Air & Sea Power Chronicles*, (June 6, 1999) <<http://www.airpower.au.af.mil/airchronicles/cc/mordan.html>> [31 March, 2006].

⁴ John Leo, "The Media in Trouble," *U.S. News & World Report*, 30 May 2005, 55.

⁵ Barry E. Wiley, "The Military-Media Connection: For Better or for Worse," *Military Review* 78, no. 6 (December 1998-February 1999): 14.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Douglas Porch, "No Bad Stories," *Naval War College Review* 60, no. 1 (Winter 2002): 92.

⁸ William V. Kennedy, *The Military and the Media* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1993), 13.

⁹ Ibid., 13.

¹⁰ Porch, 92.

¹¹ Margaret H. Belknap, "The CNN Effect: Strategic Enabler or Operational Risk," *Parameters* 32 (Autumn 2002): 102.

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